

The Sun

SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 1904.

Entered at the Post Office at New York as Second-Class Mail Matter.

Subscriptions by Mail, Postpaid.
 DAILY, Per Month.....\$6.00
 DAILY, Per Year.....60.00
 SUNDAY, Per Year.....6.00
 DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Year.....66.00
 DAILY AND SUNDAY, Per Month.....5.50
 Postage to foreign countries added.
 THE SUN, New York City.

PARIS—Rue de la Harpe, 12, near Grand Hotel, and
 Boulevard des Capucines.
 LONDON—10, Boulevard des Capucines.

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Pensioning the Citizen of Sixty-Two.

A veteran of the civil war writes as follows, manifesting under a misapprehension of the law:

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Permit me to second your motion that judicial examination be had at the very first attempt to pay out of the United States Treasury a single dollar on pension account on the strength of the Executive ruling that the age of sixty-two years shall be considered as constituting partial disability."

"Under your interpretation of the Pension Act of June 27, 1890, as referred to in your editorial of March 20, Corporal TANNER, who had both legs shot off, is not entitled to a pension. He is unable to perform manual labor, but as his headpiece is in tolerably good working order he is able to earn a support."

"The law of Congress clearly says that a pension is allowable when the old soldier is incapacitated from earning a living by manual labor, but under your interpretation of this law the old soldier must be not only physically but mentally incapable before a pension can be allowed."

"Now, if you think old age is not an infirmity which militates against manual labor, wait until you touch sixty-two years of age and then apply for a job where manual labor is required and see how quick you will be turned down."

"SILAS PECKHAM.
 Veteran of 1861-1865.
 CINCINNATI, Ohio, March 27."

The pension of Corporal TANNER, or that of any other veteran drawing money on account of wounds received or disabilities incurred in the war for the Union, does not depend on any interpretation of the Act of June 27, 1890. Soldiers disabled in the war get their pensions under different statutes, about which there is no question.

The Act of 1890, which our correspondent confuses with the general laws, provided specifically for veterans whose inability to earn a support is occasioned by infirmities not the consequence of their military service, but arising from causes subsequent to the war. This legislation increased the pension list enormously.

The two classes of pensions should be clearly differentiated. At the end of the last fiscal year they were divided numerically as follows:

Civil War pension under the general laws:	
Army invalids.....	24,130
Army widows.....	88,806
Navy invalids.....	4,142
Navy widows.....	2,221
Army nurses.....	674
Total.....	115,983
Under the Act of June 27, 1890:	
Army invalids.....	47,711
Army widows.....	153,240
Navy invalids.....	18,010
Navy widows.....	6,962
Total.....	225,923

The recent Executive order attempts to create yet another class of pensions without legislation, by assuming that the age of sixty-two is in itself an "infirmity" constituting disability and incapacity to earn a support.

Mr. SILAS PECKHAM will perceive his mistake. He is all right, however, in his opinion that there should be judicial examination of the very first attempt to pay out of the Treasury a single dollar on pension account on the strength of this Executive order.

Whenever the Executive overrides the boundary that separates its functions from those of the Legislative Department, it is the part of the Judiciary to prevent the usurpation.

The Plain Lesson of Yesterday's Fire.
 The merits of Mayor McCLELLAN's plan for a system of salt water fire mains had a most impressive practical illustration at noon yesterday.

For thirty minutes and more after arriving at the scene of the blaze in lower Broadway the firemen were unable to obtain anything like a sufficient supply of water. They stood by helpless watching the flames gain headway. The consequence was that no apparatus was needed, and finally the double nine signal, the last resort of the firemen, was sounded. That summoned a great part of the apparatus south of Forty-third street, thus leaving only partial protection for that entire region.

Such eloquent arguments in favor of the Mayor's plan should not be ignored or pass unheeded.

Russia's Loss of Prestige.

There is no doubt that the Russian Government is now doing its best to atone for many sins of omission and commission. For the transport of troops to the Far East it is straining the capacity of the single track Trans-Siberian Railway, and workmen are toiling night and day to complete the battleships intended to strengthen the Baltic fleet. Moreover, it has sent to the front Gen. KOUROPATKIN, reputed the most efficient professional soldier of the Empire, and Admiral MIAKHOFF, accounted the most skillful naval commander at its disposal. Will it be possible, however, by the most sagacious and determined efforts, to recover the ground that has been lost? Is the situation with which Russia is confronted one with which, by the nature of the case, she will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to cope?

If any hope still lingers at St. Petersburg of securing ascendancy at sea, it might as well be abandoned. The morale of the Russian Navy is shattered. The self-confidence of its personnel is gone. Moreover, were it conceivable that the Baltic and Black Sea fleets could reach Far Eastern waters during the coming summer, they would there be powerless, for they would possess no

port for coaling and repair. By the beginning of autumn Port Arthur will have been captured or rendered useless, and Vladivostok, if not taken, will be on the eve of becoming ice-locked. So long, then, as the present contest shall be limited to a duel between the two original belligerents, the command of the sea will be Japan's. Foolish, therefore, is the Russian vaunt that the terms of peace will be dictated at Tokio. Even should the sturdy soldiers of the Czar chance to prove victorious on the Asiatic continent, not one of them seems likely to set foot, except as a prisoner, on the soil of the Island Empire.

Is not the problem presented by Russia's land operations almost equally unsolvable? Suppose that in the South African War every soldier hurried forward from England after the battle of Colenso had had to be sent by a single track railway from Cairo to the Cape instead of being conveyed by sea to the theatre of conflict? What chance would England then have possessed of grappling successfully with the Boers?

The case presented is precisely like that with which Gen. KOUROPATKIN has to deal. The situation might have been different, because the Russian Government knew last summer, first, that it had no intention of evacuating Manchuria, or of suffering Japan to dominate Korea; and, secondly, that when its twofold purpose could no longer be disguised, a war with Japan would be unavoidable. It could have used the interval to place in Manchuria three hundred thousand soldiers, and to provide them with food supplies and military stores for two years in advance.

It is now known that nothing of the kind was done, but that, however lavish may have been the appropriations of money to those ends, they were deflected to illicit objects by the shocking corruption with which every department of the Russian military and civil service is gangrened. As was predicted by those acquainted with the history of her commissariat and quartermaster's department, Russia in the first week of February found herself paralyzed in Manchuria by the same unreadiness and impotence which, in the last war with Turkey, brought her to the verge of shame and ruin.

As it is, months must elapse from the outbreak of the war before she will be able to put an adequate military force in the arena of hostilities, and thereafter it will overtax the capabilities of a single track railroad more than five thousand miles in length to feed from day to day the large army assembled at the front. The fracture for but a single week of that slender thread of communication would mean nothing short of catastrophe to soldiers living from hand to mouth. In a word, the task imposed upon Gen. KOUROPATKIN must be pronounced stupendous, if not essentially impracticable; and yet he alone has prescribed it, well knowing the disgraceful cause of their country's lack of preparation in Manchuria, may yet be adjudged by the Russian people to have been guilty of a crime.

In view of all the discreditable or ominous facts, we are not surprised that a majority of the military experts concur in deeming it improbable, if not impossible, that Russia can reburnish her tarnished prestige, if she is left, single-handed, to face her Japanese opponent.

Prof. Peck and Two E's.

The world is full of books, and Prof. HARRY THURSTON PECK has read most of them and written the rest. Why, of all times that open their ample pages to him, must he select the Hon. JACOB A. RISS's thoughtful and discriminating work on "THEODORE ROOSEVELT the Citizen" to review in the *Bookman*? He has not the temperament to appreciate that masterpiece of the modern historical school. The encyclopedia has no affinity with the "Washerwoman of Finchley Common." The cold culture of the universities and the luxurious tropical simplicity of Mr. RISS are necessarily alien to each other. Latinist, humanist, reader of many tongues, maker of all articles, connoisseur of all perfumes, Prof. PECK is still essentially a sceptic.

Scornfully from the heights of Morning-side he looks down upon the sequestered vale in which Mr. RISS and Mr. ROOSEVELT make their butter, careless of the sophisticated crowd.

Prof. PECK makes this strange accusation against one of the most delightful and original of biographies and autobiographies:

"We find it almost a justification of the charge that is sometimes made against Americans to the effect that they have no sense of humor. It is satirically certain that Mr. RISS can have none, or, if he has, that he kept it in abeyance while turning out so fatuous a piece of writing. The *Evening Post* of this city has cleverly suggested that the book ought to be entitled 'Teddy, by Jake,' and the suggestion does, in fact, serve as a complete commentary and criticism. Mr. RISS's subject is surely not the President of the United States, it is just TEDDY, tout court—at least, wherever it is not JAKE."

"Fatuous" is not a polite word; but Mr. RISS does not mind it. Like his great namesake, JACOB is a plain man. He has the wisdom of sincerity. He writes nothing that he doesn't believe. He has a noble capacity of admiration, a fine enthusiasm, almost a religious fervor for his subject. One of the charms of his book to attentive readers is its revelation of the interfusion and interpenetration of two rich congenial natures.

Not since those descriptions of infernal physical metamorphosis in which DANTE wanted to know, in effect, "Where's OVID now?" has there been so absolute a blending of primitive, heroic qualities and ingenious admirations; and in Mr. RISS's pages, the metamorphosis and mixture is mental, moral, spiritual and idyllic. While doing the fullest justice to Mr. ROOSEVELT's varied and godlike excellencies, Mr. RISS doesn't forget his own. But here is no boasting, no wild triumphal yelp. You feel the antique honesty, the truthful utterance of one's self, the unabashed, innocent, fearless cry of two egos.

It is inexplicable that a scholar like Prof. PECK does not get near the soul of this diary of two throbbing souls. It is more and greater than a history. It is a poem, pastoral, epic, heroic, melodramatic, civil, military, naval and mis-

cellaneous, with stirring episodes, agreeable interludes, frequent changes of scene and two interchangeable actors. It laughs and weeps. It leaps and yells. It murmurs like the dove. It roars like the mountain lion. Prof. PECK quotes, but seems high-gravel-blind to, a favorite passage of ours:

"'Guns!' said ROOSEVELT."

A line that will never cease to glitter on the stretched forefinger of all time. Indeed, the work is rich in many ways. It will be, and should be, welcomed reverently in many homes and in every psychological laboratory. Prof. PECK's shallow and insulting criticism cannot hurt a monument that will be treasured long after MARIA BASHKIRTEFF is forgotten.

A Sermon By the Rector of Grace Church.

We have received a printed copy of a sermon preached at Grace Episcopal Church on the second Sunday in this month by the Rev. Dr. HUNTINGTON, the rector. It is a plea for Christian legislation in the matter of polygamy and divorce, and is marked throughout by an exercise of authority such as is acquired only as the result of long military training.

An army of workmen will be required. They should be, in police and sanitary matters, treated as an army. A corps of inspectors, having a larger authority than that granted to the Inspector-General's department, in the army, should exercise an alert vigilance wherever a gang of men is employed. Behind them should stand the police and sanitary authorities to enforce all ordinances with absolute rigidity. No single man, no single workman, should be permitted to imperil other areas and thousands of lives. Many of the diseases of that district speedily become epidemics. Malaria in some of its worst and most dangerous forms, yellow fever, smallpox, and dysentery are enemies that cannot be lightly disregarded. Putrid emanations from decaying organic matter are as persistent as the heat and the moisture which produce them, and the climate predisposes the human system to the diseases which result from them. It is needless to be unduly frightened by these conditions, but it is criminal folly to stop short of the utmost means for their correction and for the prevention of the evils which follow them.

The exercise of military discipline for the prevention of widespread disease can be most safely entrusted to men of military experience. The work of the Governor of the Canal Zone can be made most effective by supporting him with a staff composed of men of that kind.

Cuba's Election Tangles.
 The disputes which have followed the Cuban election were expected by all who are familiar with Cuban politics. They differ only in degree from earlier experiences. The same conditions have arisen out of every election that has been held in the island, whether before or since the withdrawal of American authority.

Just how much ground there is for some of the really serious charges which have now been brought cannot be said. Some of the allegations are certainly no more than the wail of the disappointed. Some of them promise serious trouble and vigorous debate in the Cuban House of Representatives when credentials are presented at the opening of the session. In the meantime it is safe to discount heavily the tales of wholesale ballot box stuffing; of the rejection in block of the votes cast in entire districts, and of victorious voting by officials for and on behalf of and to the exclusion of hundreds of those who were lawfully entitled to the ballot.

That crooked methods were employed is very likely. That they were limited to either of the contending parties is in no way probable. Nationalists and Republicans are doubtless equally deep in the mire, as they have been on other occasions. But, granting even a widespread corruption, the situation calls for no censorious criticism from this country. We are not yet so far away from similar proceedings in our own land that we are at liberty to jeer at our neighbors. Nor need there be any apprehension that we shall be called upon to interfere in Cuban affairs under the Platt Amendment.

If the Cubans have got themselves into a political mess, they will get themselves out of it in their own way. There may be and doubtless will be some vigorous and even intemperate language, and some exaltation that will look very much like fist-shaking. But the Cubans will straighten out their own tangle, and the incident will very likely point the way to cleaner paths on future occasions.

The Men Who Give Their Lives for the City.
 When Policeman ENIGHT walked up to a murderous thief last Sunday morning and met his death, he did not stop to wonder what would become of his wife and children when he lay dead. Had he faltered, it would have been no discredit to his bravery or loyalty to his duty. Under the existing laws the city is prohibited from giving to the survivors of the policeman's family more than \$300 a year.

When Commissioner McADOO says that he believes that the law ought to be altered so that a man who lays down his life for the city, doing his duty for the city, may feel that those dependent upon his wife and children when he lay dead. Had he faltered, it would have been no discredit to his bravery or loyalty to his duty. Under the existing laws the city is prohibited from giving to the survivors of the policeman's family more than \$300 a year.

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that lies before us. The prerequisites for such posts are clear intelligence, a measure of experience, and the ability to control men by strict military rule and discipline.

It is foolish to assume that the United States possesses any magic wand which can be waved over the Isthmus, sweeping out of existence its malarial poisons, its active and its latent germs of deadly diseases. It is worse than foolish to assume that we shall or can escape all the evils which cost the French company the lives of thousands of its workmen and scores of its officials. Heat, moisture, decayed and decaying vegetable matter, low lying swamp lands breeding mosquitoes in numbers almost beyond northern conception, are fixed conditions which can be modified but not removed. That which is most demanded is efficient safeguarding against their evil consequences. This can best be done through an exercise of authority such as is acquired only as the result of long military training.

An army of workmen will be required. They should be, in police and sanitary matters, treated as an army. A corps of inspectors, having a larger authority than that granted to the Inspector-General's department, in the army, should exercise an alert vigilance wherever a gang of men is employed. Behind them should stand the police and sanitary authorities to enforce all ordinances with absolute rigidity. No single man, no single workman, should be permitted to imperil other areas and thousands of lives. Many of the diseases of that district speedily become epidemics. Malaria in some of its worst and most dangerous forms, yellow fever, smallpox, and dysentery are enemies that cannot be lightly disregarded. Putrid emanations from decaying organic matter are as persistent as the heat and the moisture which produce them, and the climate predisposes the human system to the diseases which result from them. It is needless to be unduly frightened by these conditions, but it is criminal folly to stop short of the utmost means for their correction and for the prevention of the evils which follow them.

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because he found pleasure in doing so, and because it was good for his health. He was not aware that he had yet established a bad moral record. He said that he understood that it was cannon smoke and not cigarette smoke which was the cause of Spanish defeat in the late war. Upon the basis of his opponent's argument, he believed it "would be much in the interests of humanity to send a package of cigarettes to one's enemy."

Another member asked permission to suggest to the ladies who were promoting the anti-cigarette movement that "there is more evil done in Canada by bad cooking than by cigarettes."

Premier LAURIER joined with his political opponents in objection to the measure, it is probable that the cigarette trade will not be destroyed in Canada.

Probably no other political organization that ever pretended to amount to anything has been so incompetently managed as the Citizens' Union. Its appeal to Mayor McCLELLAN for funds "to rescue the city" from the "corrupt and disreputable influence which now control it" is a fair example of the habitual, ingrained and ineradicable stupidity of some of its people.

THE NEGLECTED HAND.

The Case of Certain Statesmen.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: The Hon. Benjamin R. Tillman of South Carolina writes with his left hand, snaps his left fingers for a page and handles his disputatious pitchfork entirely with his right hand. When in the thrilling debate with Senator Warren of Wyoming he raised the famous battle of borderland, it was with his left hand, and with one sweep of that member he dispensed one of the hoary traditions of the Senate.

The Hon. Albert J. Hopkins of Aurora, Ill., whose passionate left arm is an oriframme of tumult and war, writes with his left hand, ejaculates with the digits of that hand, and jingles his hard-earned salary in his left and trousers pocket.

The Hon. Eugene Hale of Maine and the Hon. William B. Allison of Iowa invariably exercise their left hands when ramming home argument or appropriation bills, and when they do so they invariably win. Nobody accuses either of lacking will power or force.

It may be true, as sundry Manhattan landers assert, that bookkeepers using the left hand are awkward and inept, but among men entirely great the left hand is as mighty as the right. INNOCENT BYSTANDER.

WASHINGTON, March 25.

The Sinistrous Per Cent.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—Sir: Mr. Goldfeder's argument in this morning's paper that a left-handed clerk is not a desirable employee because he keeps his paper files, left files, &c., in a different place from that of his right-handed colleague, is not convincing, for what difference does that make? Why should there be any extra work to have the new "right" files? If no one but himself uses these articles?

When Mr. Goldfeder, however, asserts that the left-handed man lacks will power, that he "wouldn't be left-handed," he reads on ground with which he is evidently not familiar. If anything is proved by his left-handedness it is that he must possess a great deal of power to persist in the use of his left hand in the face of the determined efforts which are always made to induce a child to use the right hand.

The question of left-handedness is one which has been the subject of acerbate research for years, and cannot be dismissed by such off-hand assertions as Mr. Goldfeder's. Numerous theories have been advanced in explanation which this is not the place to discuss, as it would lead too far but it may be said, that will power has absolutely nothing to do with it. All the evidence points to the fact that left-handedness is a matter of the brain as the cause of left-handedness, and that would explain the fact that left-handedness is a hereditary trait of people toward the use of the left hand.

For several years, in the reports of the league and elsewhere, I have urged the churches to lead the States, if possible, in efforts at uniformity, especially with regard to the work of the committees in New York and the successful result of a measure in the outcome of this policy. Hitherto the churches have been slow to agree to the specific measure. My suggestion has been that they begin where they can hope to get the most effect, by agreeing to the move on to more difficult tasks as they are able to do so. This, evidently, is the policy for the churches to follow, and the committee on national and State legislation seem to have a very just view of the case.

It is an agreement of the churches is necessary to the agreement of the States. And I think it is fair to say that the churches are in a fair way to do so, and are working to bring to bear on the States. Thanks to Bishop Doane and his associates, the convention of the churches is being held by agreeing where we can and working to gether where we can. S. W. DIXON.

ATLANTIC, Mass., March 25.

Sayings That Say Something.

From the Indianapolis Journal.

Judge Parker may be a very good man to beat Hearst with, but when it comes to beating Theodore Roosevelt he would not be dangerous.

From the Nashville American.

The time has come when we should present our men. Send our soldiers to the front, and if they can't agree that the South has the man, nominate him. Otherwise, take the best there is for the country, but exhibit the disposition to determine the matter by the sword.

From the Boston Herald.

The chief difference between President Roosevelt and his adversaries is that he is playing politics, while most of them don't know how.

From the Boston Transcript.

Nobody can claim for Mr. Fairbanks that he is magnetic, either as a speaker or in his personality. He is, indeed, almost as cautious as Senator Aldrich, and he is nominated for the Vice-Presidency we need not expect that his activities in the campaign will be signalized by eagle flights of oratory.

From the Boston Transcript.

Politics "Makes Strange Bedfellows." So many mistakes have appeared in accounts of the primary contest between the Plaza Center Park Republican Club and the Twenty-ninth Assembly district that we respectfully request you to publish the following:

First—The Plaza Center Park Republican Club will place its own ticket in the field and has made no combination with any other club or faction in the district. It hopes for the support of every Republican in the district who desires a strong and efficient organization, capable of increasing the Republican vote and putting an end to diminishing majorities.

Second—We have no quarrel with the Governor Odell nor Senator Platt is involved in it.